



Oregon State  
University

## The Board of Trustees of Oregon State University

### Meeting of the Academic Strategies Committee

March 7, 2025

9:15 – 11:20 a.m.

Virtual meeting held by Zoom

### MINUTES

Committee members present: Stephanie Bulger (*vice chair*), Kate Carter-Cram, Ed Feser (*ex-officio*), Greg Macpherson, Román Hernández (*ex-officio*), Julie Maning (chair), Camille Palmer, Irem Tumer (*ex-officio*)

Other trustees present: Kassy Bonanno, Julia Brim-Edwards, Susan Clark, Grant Kitamura, Toby Luther, Elise McClure, Marlena (MJ) Mirho, Jayathi Murthy

University staff present: Jackie Bangs, Jon Boeckenstedt, Gigi Bruce, Katie Fast, Alix Gitelman, Becca Gose, Carla Ho‘ā, Jen Humphreys, Stacy Jeffries, Philip Mote, Paul Odenthal, Rob Odom, Julie Penry, Patti Snopkowski, Irem Tumer, Scott Vignos

#### 1. Call to Order / Roll Call / Declaration of a Quorum

Committee Chair Julie Manning called the meeting to order. Board Secretary Jackie Bangs called the roll and verified a quorum.

#### 2. Provost’s report

##### a. Status Report: Institutional accreditation, program accreditations and academic programs in development or review

Provost and Executive Vice President Ed Feser delivered his 33<sup>rd</sup> and final report to the committee, providing updates on a range of topics.

He reported positive results from the recent College of Business accreditation site visit, noting that the accrediting body will recommend full reaccreditation. He also commended the college’s efforts to improve student success.

Feser reported that his office was working to ensure a smooth transition as the end of his tenure as provost approaches, with Interim Provost Designate Belinda Batten scheduled to begin her appointment on April 1. He added that the Office of the Provost has also commenced planning for eventually onboarding a new permanent provost.

He reported that OSU is taking a deliberate and measured approach to the federal administration transition, with a team of university leaders and subject matter experts acting quickly to gather information and assess potential impacts as federal actions and executive orders occur. He added that senior leaders are meeting weekly to discuss emerging issues and stay informed.

The provost provided updates on the implementation of *Prosperity Widely Shared*, the strategic plan launched just over a year ago. He noted that implementation is being led by the provost and guided by an implementation steering committee chaired by Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Alix Gitelman and including 18 domain leaders who have developed a framework for implementation.

Feser reported that two university-wide summits are planned to ensure that the university community is actively engaged in strategic plan implementation. He noted that the first summit – focused on student success – is scheduled for April 22 and the second summit – focused on research and innovation – is scheduled for October 20. He added that the summits would be held annually moving forward.

The provost provided updates on key executive searches, noting that finalists for four positions had interviewed during the past few weeks and that the searches were expected to conclude soon:

- Dean of the College of Engineering
- Dean of the College of Health
- Vice Provost for Enrollment Management
- Vice Provost for Extension and Engagement

Feser concluded his report with congratulations to Professor of Mathematics Elise Lockwood, who was recently selected to receive the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers, the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on outstanding scientists and engineers early in their careers.

Feser shared his parting thoughts about the committee, highlighting the careful approach to board governance and commending trustees' dedication. He recognized current and former board secretaries Jackie Bangs and Debbie Colbert for their support.

He offered positive feedback on the structure of the committee, which allows senior leaders to present their domains every year, and acknowledged the contributions of the board secretaries and chairs in developing this model. In conclusion, Feser expressed gratitude for the work of the committee, saying it has made his job as provost easier and helped improve strategic issues.

Committee Chair Manning thanked the provost for his report and expressed gratitude to Belinda Batten, who will serve as interim provost designate after Feser's departure.

### **3. Consent agenda**

#### **a. Minutes of the Jan. 16, 2025, Academic Strategies Committee Meeting**

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made by Trustee Macpherson, seconded by Trustee Palmer, and approved by all committee members in attendance. The motion carried.

### **4. Discussion items**

#### **a. Research Update**

Vice President for Research and Innovation Irem Tumer and Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer Scott Vignos described the university's approach to planning and response to the federal administration transition, including navigating the quickly changing landscape and monitoring and responding to executive orders and actions.

Tumer noted that the speed and scope of proposed changes have been overwhelming, particularly for faculty and researchers in certain disciplines. She reported that the university leadership team is coordinating responses and developing contingency plans to at least help backstop some temporary funding impacts.

Tumer noted that university leaders are also actively engaging with federal and state legislators to stay informed and provide information on the impacts of funding cuts to research universities,

adding that a dedicated OSU work group is monitoring the situation daily, analyzing directives and court orders and supporting principal investigators (PIs).

Tumer noted that initial temporary restraining orders preventing federal implementation of funding freezes have now turned into preliminary injunctions, allowing time for OSU to assess and prepare for potential impacts. She said the university has received 14 stop work orders out of over 1,900 active awards, with some already rescinded, adding that payment system holds on several grants have been lifted.

She said OSU is offering coaching sessions to support PIs working on new proposals, and efforts are being made to diversify funding sources by increasing partnerships with industry, national labs and other partners

Tumer concluded her portion of the update by emphasizing the importance of continuing research work and meeting milestones despite uncertainties.

Vignos discussed the university's approach to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in light of recent executive orders and actions.

He noted that OSU's efforts are framed in terms of inclusive excellence, which values diverse perspectives and backgrounds, and stressed that the university is committed to creating access and opportunity for all while promoting a culture of curiosity and critical inquiry.

Vignos reported that, after careful review, the university is confident that its programs and curricula are compliant with state and federal laws. He noted that programs are open to all, and decisions related to admissions, hiring and other areas are not based on race, color, national origin or gender.

He said the university has been engaging with faculty, students and community stakeholders to provide guidance and support, including sessions for PIs and leadership groups to address concerns and provide information.

Vignos concluded his update by reiterating the university's commitment to its mission and values and stressing the importance of continuing to support faculty and students

The following topics were addressed during conversation with trustees:

Trustee Palmer commented on the positive impact of the university's firm commitment to its principles and values and asked about messaging for faculty concerned about funding reductions. Tumer acknowledged the uncertainty and added that changes in the funding landscape are inevitable. She said that she and Vignos would continue to hold sessions with PIs and maintain open channels for PIs to contact them.

Board Vice Chair Chávez-Haroldson commended university leadership for addressing faculty anxiety and appreciated the coaching sessions and support being provided to them.

Committee Vice Chair Bulger commended efforts to diversify the research portfolio and inquired about building on current relationships for diversification. Tumer said the university's investment in the Jen-Hsun Huang and Lori Mills Huang Collaborative Innovation Complex and its supercomputer was setting the university up for success as a leader in the field of AI. She mentioned that the EDIR (Economic Development and Industry Relations) office is seeking opportunities to diversify outside of federal agencies through partnerships with industry and national labs.

**b. Academic Programs: Undergraduate and Graduate briefing**

Senior Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Alix Gitelman and Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School Philip Mote provided an overview of the undergraduate and graduate student population at OSU, including a summary of the distribution of students across various academic colleges and disciplines.

Gitelman noted that the College of Engineering has the majority of undergraduate students, followed by the College of Business and the College of Liberal Arts. She added that the computer science post-baccalaureate degree offered through Ecampus had the highest number of post-baccalaureate students.

Mote reported that the College of Engineering is also the largest college for graduate students, adding that the College of Education has the second highest enrollment of graduate and professional students, while the College of Science has the highest proportion of PhDs and the College of Agricultural Sciences has the largest number of certificate-only enrollees.

Gitelman also provided an update regarding Core Education – the university's effort to create a more modern and impactful general education program – a multi-year curricular reform process that will launch this summer. She acknowledged that implementation of Core Education has been a heavy lift and thanked the faculty and staff who have worked tirelessly to make the launch a success.

Gitelman also discussed academic unit assessment, a comprehensive review process that looks carefully at the health and success of all academic colleges, the Honors College, the graduate school and OSU-Cascades, noting this work will feature heavily in upcoming university accreditation efforts.

Mote discussed student success metrics, focusing on retention and completion rates for graduate programs, noting that the eight-year completion rate for doctorates is 67%, which is above the national average and the four-year completion rate for master's programs is around 85%.

He noted the uncertainty about research funding and its impact on graduate research assistants, with some OSU programs being cautious with offers to incoming students. He added that the university is thinking through ways to support current graduate research assistants and postdocs if research funding takes a pronounced downward turn.

Mote discussed the university's long-term vision for renovating academic programs, which looks different at the undergraduate, master's, and PhD levels. This includes rethinking core courses, transitioning PhD students more quickly into research and building opportunities to learn transferable skills.

Gitelman and Mote addressed the following topics during discussion with trustees:

Committee Vice Chair Bulger asked about the transitions course that is part of the new Core Education program and if there were conversations with partners about preparing students for OSU. Gitelman explained that there are two levels of the transitions course – one for first-time full-time freshmen and one for transfer students – adding that communication with community college partners has been ongoing.

Board Chair Hernández shared his personal experience as a transfer student and emphasized the benefits of the transitions course.

Committee Vice Chair Bulger inquired about trends in arts and humanities and social sciences.

Gitelman noted the national trend of decline in humanities and stressed the importance of creating

interdisciplinary programs. Mote stressed that OSU has much to offer in the graduate space and that robust thinking across disciplines was key to the future.

Trustee Macpherson asked about legislative efforts to manage the transfer process and the effectiveness of these interventions. Gitelman explained challenges with the major transfer maps in particular, adding that the common course numbering effort has been successful and will ultimately be more helpful to transfer students than major transfer maps.

Committee Chair Manning inquired about student success and the six-year graduation rate. Gitelman noted the upcoming launch of core education, the new model for academic advising with additional central support and a new yearlong student onboarding program, with the hopes that those initiatives will have positive impacts on the numbers – though she stressed that reliable metrics measuring those impacts would take some time.

**c. Enrollment Management and Financial Aid briefing**

Vice Provost for Enrollment Management Jon Boeckenstedt provided an enrollment overview.

Boeckenstedt expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve at Oregon State University and acknowledged the dedication of his colleagues as he nears the end of his tenure at the university.

Boeckenstedt emphasized the complexity of enrollment management and the importance of context in understanding enrollment data. He also noted the critical nexus between academia and external factors like markets, demographics, economics and politics.

Boeckenstedt reported that OSU has achieved 28 straight years of fall-over-fall enrollment growth – a statistic unmatched by any other public university in the nation. He attributed this success to the university's forward-looking approach and resilience.

He noted the rebound of enrollment at the Corvallis campus – which has reached record levels. Boeckenstedt also recognized steady growth at the Cascades campus and the meteoric rise in student numbers and credits at Ecampus as contributing factors to overall enrollment growth. He added that the increase in non-resident, full-time undergraduates at the Corvallis and Cascades campuses has boosted revenue and helped lower costs for Oregon residents.

Boeckenstedt discussed future challenges to enrollment, including population decline, income gaps, college costs and public concerns about the value of higher education. He emphasized the importance of strategic planning and adapting to external realities. He also highlighted the potential impact of executive orders on financial aid programs.

Boeckenstedt addressed the following topics in discussion with trustees:

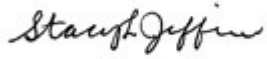
Trustee Macpherson asked about the decline in high school graduates and if there was a need to bring in more out-of-state students. Boeckenstedt explained the importance of balancing resident and non-resident enrollment, adding that resident enrollment has remained flat or declined despite OSU's commitment to accept all qualified Oregonians.

Committee Chair Manning asked about international enrollment trends and the university's strategy for managing international enrollment. Boeckenstedt emphasized the importance of adaptability and weighing the benefits of international students against non-resident students from a revenue standpoint. He stressed the role of the INTO OSU partnership and noted tactical challenges in international enrollment, which include factors beyond the university's control, like wait times for visas. President Murthy added insights from a recent trip to Taiwan, Thailand, South Korea and Vietnam, emphasizing strong interest in those countries for a U.S. education.

**5. Adjournment**

With no further discussion or business before the committee, Committee Chair Manning adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,



Stacy Jeffries  
Executive Assistant, Office of the Board of Trustees